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8 February 1961

VISIT HONORABLE MR. MEET SENIOR OFFICERS + LE

As you can well imagine, Washington has been an interesting and busy place these past several weeks. There have been several developments affecting the Agency that I want to mention to you.

President Kennedy paid us a signal honor on the afternoon of January 26th when he came to the Administration Building to meet our senior officers and to be briefed for nearly two hours. The President showed a keen interest in our work and discussed several matters of major interest with us. He was accompanied by McGeorge Bundy, his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. Adding to the significance of the President's visit on this particular afternoon was the fact that Washington was having an unusually severe snow-storm, Federal Government employees had been dismissed before our meeting and travel to and from the Agency was not easy.

The President has displayed a keen interest in all phases of our work. He reads the Central Intelligence Bulletin from cover to cover each morning. He has indicated that he is anxious to receive as much material in the Bulletin as we believe to be worthy of his attention. Hence it has been substantially enlarged.

Other members of the new administration are also displaying keen interest in our work, and we have been providing a series of briefings. These have included top officials in State and Defense and the Attorney General, among others. We think that this is an excellent opportunity to insure at the outset that these officials know what we can do, how we can do it, and to gain an appreciation of intelligence on the part of senior policy-making officials.

President Kennedy has decided to continue the Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities. Although the Board has at times been critical, it has also been cooperative and constructive. It has made a significant contribution in stimulating the intelligence community to greater efforts. The composition of the Board has not as yet been determined, although it will probably include several of the former members.

As I know you are all interested in the status of the new building, I would mention that we plan to start moving units about Labor Day. The north portion will be finished first, and the DD/I units will go there. Other units will move as additional portions of the building are completed. This severe winter in the Washington area has slowed work, but not to a major degree.

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On the occasion of President Eisenhower's leaving office, I made these observations to him in a letter:

"These have been important and formative years for this Agency. You have given us constant encouragement and support in the collection and coordination of intelligence for national security decisions. You have given intelligence a role in our whole national security structure which it never had before.

"It has been a particular privilege for me to have had the opportunity to meet with you and the NSC and to report on the critical developments of these past years."

In his reply he stated:

"As I think you know, I wish you and your associates in the Central Intelligence Agency well in the tremendously important job you do for our country. Upon the work of your organization there is an almost frightening responsibility; I know all members of the CIA will continue to do the best they can for all of us."

These words need little amplification.

President Kennedy's State of the Union address vividly described what faces this nation. Our role is of primary importance. I know that I can count on you, and all of your associates, to do your share.

Sincerely,

/s/ Allen W. Dulles